



THE RESPONDER

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE • JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER
OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM • DECEMBER 2014



Vessel Fires Wreak Havoc

The Region 2 La Porte Field Office of the Texas General Land Office has been quite busy responding to recent vessel fires. On August 29, 2014, Senior Response Officer Craig Kartye responded to a privately owned 50-foot Neptunus yacht, *Botox*, that had caught fire and sunk. According to the owner, the R/V *Botox* had operated flawlessly for two hours and was returning to the dock in Clear Lake after taking prospective buyers on a test run. However, upon entering the Clear Lake Channel, the port engine died. In order to evaluate the engine problem, the vessel owner opened the engine room hatch. It was at this time that he noticed smoke emanating from the vessel's engine compartment. Concerned for his safety and that of his passenger, he immediately closed the hatch and made his way to the shoreline. Once along the shoreline, he secured his vessel and notified the fire department. The Seabrook, Kemah and Port of Houston fire departments all ultimately responded to the scene. Unfortunately, upon their arrival, the fiberglass vessel was fully engulfed in flames, resulting in the vessel burning to the water line

and sinking. Of the 350 gallons of diesel fuel on board, all but approximately 30 gallons burned up in the fire. The remaining 30 gallons leaked out of the boat and into the containment boom preemptively deployed by the local fire department. A spill response contractor was called to the scene to remove the spilled diesel and a local salvage company removed the remaining portion of the vessel from the channel. After further investigation, it was determined that a glycol line in the intercooler, associated with the vessel's high pressure turbo, ruptured, spraying glycol all over the engine. Heat from the engine ignited the glycol, resulting in the fire.



Three recreational vessels on fire at Kemah Boardwalk Marina result in the total loss of all three vessels.

On October 3, 2014, at approximately 12:30 p.m., Qualified Response Officer Jesse Mayorga received a call from the U.S. Coast Guard about a boat fire in the Intracoastal Waterway off Bolivar Peninsula. Mayorga arrived on-scene and the Bolivar Fire Department was in the process of extinguishing the fire. The owner of the vessel stated that the fire started in the engine room. He had recently put new engines in the vessel and was testing them out for the first time. The vessel owner and two passengers were on board at the time of the fire; they abandoned ship, swam to shore, and thankfully had no injuries.

Then on October 30, 2014, Advanced Response Officer Robert Hadley was on a routine vehicle patrol and came upon a fire at the Kemah Boardwalk Marina. Three vessels were totally engulfed in flames and fire departments from Kemah, Seabrook and League City responded. The owner of one vessel had been doing some repair work when a spark ignited fumes causing an explosion. Unfortunately, the owner sustained some burn injuries and was taken

to the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. The fire was limited to the three vessels and resulted in their total loss, along with part of the marina's dock.

The GLO Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division would like to remind recreational boaters that unexpected problems can ruin an enjoyable day and they should always be prepared.



A recreational vessel catches fire.



R/V *Botox* catches fire after taking prospective buyers on a test run.



The remains of one of the vessels and damaged dock after the fire at the Kemah Boardwalk Marina.

EDUCATE ♦ PREVENT ♦ RESPOND

Rose City Marsh Project

Oil Spill Region 1 Director J.T. Ewing teamed up with personnel from the GLO's Professional Services division to view the Rose City Marsh Project. The project site is located in Orange County, east of Beaumont and south of Rose City. The site is part of an old oil field that has subsided as a result of oil and gas exploration activities. The purpose of the project is to beneficially use the dredge spoil from an Oil Tanking Beaumont project for habitat creation and mitigation on state-owned submerged land. The project will create 324.03 acres of habitat and 24.6 acres of mitigation, for a total project encumbrance of 348.63 acres of coastal public land using approximately 1.5 million cubic yards of dredge material.



Region 1 Director J.T. Ewing provides Professional Services personnel with an air boat lift to view the Rose City Marsh Project.

Safe Harbor During Tropical Storm Dolly

On September 3, 2014, Tropical Storm Dolly bore down on the northern Mexican coast causing many fishing vessels to take cover during the storm. About 60 Mexican fishing vessels north of the storm entered the Brazos-Santiago Pass to seek refuge in the Port of Brownsville Turning Basin. Due to the low visibility and heavy winds, three Mexican shrimp boats ran hard aground and beached

themselves while trying to enter the safe harbor. F/V *Don Alvarez* and F/V *Leticia* ran aground in the Brownsville Ship Channel, while F/V *Jackie C* landed north of the jetties on South Padre Island. After a few days of taking refuge at the port, most of the vessels returned to the Gulf

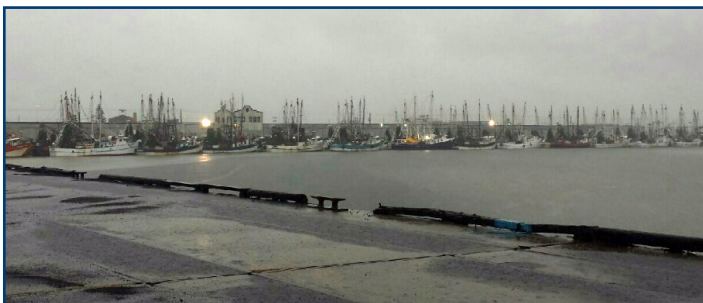


F/V *Jackie C* landed north of the jetties on South Padre Island and was freed several days later.

of Mexico. Salvage crews and a spill response contractor remained on scene to assist the stranded fishing vessels. Fortunately, they sustained no structural damage to their hulls, which allowed contractors to free them several days later from the shallow waters.

The Port of Brownsville remains a safe harbor for national and international vessels during storms and other natural disasters, because of the proximity to the U.S.-Mexican border. Over the course of several years of hurricane and tropical storm threats, a number of vessels from northern Mexico and the lower gulf have entered the Brownsville Ship Channel seeking refuge. While seeking safe harbor during 10+ seas, it's common for vessels to run aground while attempting to navigate the small pass. Based upon years of experience responding to these types of incidents, the Texas General Land Office prepares and plans for the challenges that may lie ahead. The agency strives to ensure safety while preventing and responding to oil spills during natural disasters.

Thanks to collaborative efforts with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Port of Brownsville Police Department, the temporary refuge of foreign vessels in the port occurred without incident, which is a credit to the professionalism of all involved.



Approximately 60 Mexican F/Vs take cover in the Port of Brownsville Turning Basin.

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281-470-6597

Corpus Christi

6300 Ocean Drive, Ste. 5847
Corpus Christi, Texas
78412-5847
361-825-3300

Brownsville

2145 EMS Lane
Brownsville, Texas
78521-2666
956-504-1417

Port Lavaca

414 Travis Street
Port Lavaca, Texas
77979-2351
361-552-8081

Report oil spills
1-800-832-8224
24 hours

The Responder is published by the Texas General Land Office.
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or by phone at 281-470-6597.

Texas Trustee Fall 2014 Summit

The Natural Resource Damage Assessment Team (NRDA) of the General Land Office's Oil Spill Division hosted the semi-annual Texas Trustee Summit at the Armand Bayou Nature Center in Pasadena from Oct. 14-16. Staff from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the GLO attended the meeting.

Most of the first day was dedicated to team-building exercises including a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator workshop conducted by Ralph Osio of the GLO's Human Resources Division. The trustees thoroughly enjoyed the MBTI workshop, which prompted discussions that continued through the week. There was laughter, intense discussions and lots of "Aha, now I understand" moments. The day concluded with a paddling tour of Armand Bayou led by ABNC staff. Trustees were fortunate to see a nesting pair of bald eagles soaring over the bayou. In addition to the bald eagles, numerous species of wading birds graced the shores and mud flats and several alligators were spotted sunning themselves along the banks in the warm rays of the setting sun.

On the second day of the summit, Kim Griffith of the GLO's Region 5 Oil Spill Office gave a presentation about the increasing production of the Eagle Ford Shale Play and how this has led to an exponential increase of crude products moving through the ports and barge canals. In turn, this increases the risk of spills and incidents that could impact some of the most remote and sensitive estuarine habitats in Texas. Griffith also discussed the challenges of responding to spills in this area of the coast, as exemplified by the recent Texas City Y Spill. In addition, State and Federal Scientific Support Coordinators Steve Buschang of the GLO and Paige Doelling of NOAA described how to effectively integrate NRDA into spill response.

The rest of the summit was spent on updates from the trustee agencies, case discussions and assignment of action items to

agencies. The summit was a great success and all of the participants enjoyed the location and activities provided by the GLO.



Enjoying the wildlife during the scenic paddling tour.



Meeting attendees enjoy the beautiful weather during a paddling tour along Armand Bayou.

The Importance of Contingency Plans

Contingency plans are developed to safeguard and prepare companies in the event of a disaster. They lay out the strategy for responding quickly and effectively to an event to minimize personnel injury and/or death, damage to the environment, business disruption, loss of revenue, embarrassment, penalties and additional regulations. The role of the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program is more than just regulatory authority for preventing oil spills. The agency conducts and participates in numerous facility/vessel spill exercises, audits and inspections to promote a positive working relationship and ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of contingency plans.

Whether developed by company employees or external plan writers, the first and foremost priority is that the plan be available and understood by everyone involved. As valuable a tool as it is, if it doesn't remain functional and updated, it will sit on a shelf and gather dust. As a general rule, contingency plans should be tailored to the vessel or facility for which they will be used. A one-plan-fits-all approach may not be as effective when an unauthorized oil discharge occurs.

The following are the top 10 problems observed during contingency plan reviews:

- ◆ Unable to locate contingency plan

- ◆ Plan contains incorrect contact numbers
- ◆ Emergency numbers go to a voice mail box
- ◆ Drill logs are not maintained
- ◆ Data is inaccurate
- ◆ GPS locations don't match the facility
- ◆ Plan contains an outdated personnel list
- ◆ Plan is generally unorganized
- ◆ Description and maps of environmentally sensitive areas are missing
- ◆ Unrealistic response strategies to contain and clean a worst case discharge

Developing and maintaining an adequate contingency plan is hard work, costly and time consuming. Significant importance must be placed on this task for it to be done effectively. Plans should be periodically tested to the greatest extent possible. After the test, modifications should be made based on gaps, lessons learned or unforeseen contingencies discovered as a result of the test. Some companies may be tempted to play the odds and forego the extra effort of creating a solid contingency plan. However, given that a company's very survival may be at issue, this investment is well worth the cost in both time and money.

Keppel Amfels Management Host Meet and Greet

Keppel Amfels Management hosted a meet and greet event on October 23 to discuss the latest developments in safety, security, the environment and spill prevention at their Port of Brownsville Shipyard. Amfels' president, Simon Lee, along with Safety, Health & Environmental Manager Leo Alaniz conducted very informative presentations to the group on the latest developments regarding these issues. Upon conclusion of the presentations, a group discussion was held followed by a luncheon with all officials in attendance. The GLO Region 4 Brownsville office would like to thank Keppel Amfels Management and representatives for taking a proactive stance and looks forward to future meetings and drills hosted at its shipyard.



Region 4 Brownsville personnel were invited to Keppel Amfels Management's meet and greet event held at its Port of Brownsville Shipyard.

Good-bye Derelict Vessels in San Antonio Bay

With the 2005 passage of House Bill 2096, decades of vessel abandonment have come to an end for derelict vessels and structures. HB 2096 gives the Texas Land Commissioner the authority to remove abandoned and derelict vessels and structures and prohibit the abandonment of vessels in Texas coastal waters. A specific site in San Antonio Bay is one example of what occurs without regulations in place to prevent vessel abandonment. The site had become a nautical graveyard for vessels holding large amounts of waste, and the deteriorating wrecks were a navigational hazard.

Still, the temptation remained for those who did not want to pull their boats from the water and dispose of them properly. Dismantlement and removal of identifying numbers and letters had become the norm, as in the case of an abandoned vessel identified as DVS 908. This vessel had been spotted at Westside Navigation District in Seadrift where it was being dismantled by the owner for removal. However, the vessel did maintain a bilge pump for rainwater removal. Then without warning, the vessel vanished from the harbor and re-appeared at the San Antonio Bay site, with the name and all identifying numbers removed. A Texas General Land Office investigation revealed the responsible party, and the owner

was forced to reclaim the vessel. With the aid of the Seadrift Police Department, which enforces the city's litter laws, and HB 2096, the vessel was towed to the city harbor, where it fell under direct jurisdiction of the city of Seadrift and the Seadrift Harbor Master. The vessel was further dismantled and properly disposed of under the watchful eye of all agencies involved.

After a long process, guided by HB 2096 and the GLO derelict vessel program, remnants of a variety of vessels have been brought to the surface and disposed of using funds from the Coastal Impact and Assistance Program. The process includes selecting a vendor; scheduling; monitoring, documenting and observing the removal; and ensuring that all submerged debris has been removed and disposed of properly. The removal of the vessels in San Antonio Bay began on June 24 at daybreak and continued until July 1. It involved 14 vessels or partial vessels that could be identified and totaled 240 cubic yards of unsalvageable debris, 3,641 pounds of salvageable steel and 246 pounds of dirty brass.

This area of San Antonio Bay will no longer be an enticing dumping ground for unwanted and unseaworthy vessels. The removal of this eyesore just off the shores of Seadrift has resulted in safer navigation.

Marsh Mayhem

On October 2, 2014 at approximately 11 a.m. the General Land Office Region 2 office was notified by Linc Energy of a production pipeline leak and spill into Swan Marsh in Chambers County. The line originates as a 2-inch production line from a platform in state tract 127, and becomes a 10-inch line buried 5 feet deep once it enters Swan Marsh en route to a separator and process facility. Response Officer Bob Brock arrived on scene, made an assessment and contacted the U.S. Coast Guard, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the GLO NRDA Trustees to update them. The spill had migrated from the leak source, flowed through the marsh and into the water at the junction of Cedar Bayou and Trinity Bay. Based on a production analysis and engineering calculations, Linc Energy estimated the spill to be 18 barrels of oil and 100 barrels of process water. Prior to Brock's arrival, Linc's in-house contractor, SWAT, had deployed absorbent boom and pads on the water's edge to help prevent the spill from spreading into Galveston Bay. OMI was also contracted by Linc Energy to assist in containment and cleanup operations.

During the spill event, a storm front moved into the area and the

USCG, TPWD and GLO requested that the water/grass line of the marsh be boomed with hard boom to contain the leading edge of the oil. The boom was to protect the TPWD's newly planted marsh grass, and to prevent the oil from moving into Galveston Bay and the Houston Ship Channel. The Region 2 field office personnel (Bob Brock and Craig Kartye) volunteered the use of an air boat, and assisted OMI in deploying hard boom, lined with sweep, prior to the front arriving.

Ultimately, Linc excavated the line, patched it, and was requested by the agencies to sample the surface and subsurface soils to determine the amount of excavation needed to remediate the area around the origin of the leak. Linc hired Leggette, Brashears and Graham, Inc. to develop a sampling plan and a remediation plan. Additionally, Linc had the area surveyed to determine the elevation to backfill prior to replanting the indigenous grasses and other remediation activities in the area destroyed by the spill. As of late October, the site has been delineated and excavation with back fill has begun. The hard boom has been removed and the soft boom will remain until the next rain event to determine its necessity.